



GOVERNMENT OF PUERTO RICO

Department of Natural and Environmental Resources

REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL (RFP)

EXPANSION OF DNER'S LAND BASE NURSERY OF MARINE ORGANISMS FOR ECOLOGICAL RESTORATION OF NORTEAST CORAL REEFS

The Department of Natural and Environmental Resources through the Natural Protected Areas Bureau (NPAB) is seeking applicants to expand existing operations of its land-based nursery of marine organisms in Ceiba, Puerto Rico (CIROM or Centro de Investigación y Restauración de Organismos Marinos). The CIROM was developed in 2022 as part of the management efforts and strategies to support current marine benthic restoration practices on the marine protected areas of the La Cordillera Natural Reserve, Canal de Luis Peña Natural Reserve, the Marine Extension of the Northeast Ecological Corridor Natural Reserve, the Marine Extension of the Cabezas de San Juan Natural Reserve, as well as unprotected but sensitive marine areas of the northeast region of Puerto Rico. Currently, CIROM is focused on sea urchin husbandry (*Diadema antillarum* and *Tripneustes ventricosus*) and is currently expanding to the propagation of coral species via micro fragmentation.

This project will address a serious gap in coral reef restoration efforts by increasing DNER's capacity to reintroduce a variety of important herbivores and coral species the ecosystem. Given the multiple threats that coral reefs currently face (e.g. algae overgrowth, disease, climate change), reintroduction of keystone species will both support the continuity of ecosystem functions and ongoing restoration efforts lead by other stakeholders. This effort is particularly important in the Northeast region of Puerto Rico (also known as the Northeast Marine Corridor) where a vast spread of marine ecosystems, land-based sources of pollution and intense recreational uses coalesce."

Applicants must submit proposals that aim to improve CIROM via the following tasks:

- 1) Include a wider range of marine invertebrate herbivores
- 2) Expand the facilities to include the rearing of sea urchin larvae,
- 3) Expand the facilities to include the cultivation of different species of macro algae
- 4) Enhance the facilities resilience to natural disasters.

In addition, contractors must:

- Submit with the Proposal expansion renderings.
- Develop a workplan in junction with DNER personnel (DNER is providing state-match for the project and supports operation and management of the facilities).
- Submit quarterly progress reports and with each invoice.



ORGANIZATIONS PLANNING TO SUBMIT A PROPOSAL MUST SUBMIT PROOF THAT THEY MEET THESE MINIMUM REQUIREMENTS:

- Expertise in land-based nursery operation and management, as evidenced by the contracting of personnel with expertise in aquaculture systems (both closed and semi-enclosed systems)
- Expertise in developmental biology of marine benthic organisms
- Field experience in marine restoration practices via re-introduction of lab-reared organisms

Proposal content: The proposal should not exceed 10 pages in length. Pages in excess of 10 will not be reviewed. The proposal should address the following items in a concise and yet complete manner and offer all the necessary information for the evaluation the proposal:

(1) Title page.

- Project title
- Project team/Project team organization – include name, title, affiliations and contact information of the project leader and key personnel.
- Project Cost- including deliverables (progress report, etc)
- Abstract- describe briefly the project being proposed, and any important details.

(2) Proposal Narrative:

- **Goals and Objectives**
- **Methodology**- outline project design and describe tasks that will be completed to meet the project objectives.
- **Site description**- Project is island wide including Mona Island, Vieques and Culebra.
- **Roles and Responsibilities**- define the roles and responsibilities of all project participants.
- **Relevant Experience**-briefly describe relevant experience of the project leader and partners.
- **Outputs, Outcomes, and Evaluation**- specify the expected products and results that will be produced over the course of the project. Discuss the methods to evaluate the effectiveness and success of the project.
- **Project Schedule** - dates of starting and finishing project, as well as a detailed time frame regarding reports, milestones and/or specific activities.
- **Project Budget** – matching funds are encouraged, but not required.

Eligibility: All entities authorized to work in Puerto Rico

Available funding: \$500,000.00

Estimated Timeframe: June 2023 – March 2024

Submittal: All proposals must be received by 4:00pm EST on Friday April 14, 2023.

Applicants should submit both an electronic copy of their proposal as follows:

- Digital- pdf or *Microsoft Word* documents. Should be sent at fvelazquez@drna.pr.gov directly to:

Mr. Farel Velázquez
Auxiliary Secretary of Conservation and Biodiversity
Department of Environment and Natural Resources
Bureau of Natural Protected Areas (NPAB)
Edificio Cruz A. Matos
Carr. 8838 km 6.3 El Cinco
Río Piedras, PR 00936

Proposal Evaluation Process: Proposals that meet all the requirements of this RFP, will be evaluated by a review team of the NPAB. Proposals will be evaluated on the applicant's demonstrated ability to perform the tasks previously described. Evaluating the effectiveness of the proposed practices and partners involved will also weigh heavily. The criteria that will be used to evaluate the Proposals will be:

- a. Comprehensiveness of the proposal.
- b. Individual or firm's experience and history of performance on similar projects, regarding such factors as quality of work, cost control, and ability to meet schedule.
- c. Adequacy of technical staff, as demonstrated by experience, education, and potential project role.
- d. Firm or individual understands of the services required by the DNER.
- e. Proposed costs.
- f. Organization and scheduling of the project requirements.
- g. Knowledge and ability to comply with federal procurement standards and grant regulations.
- h. Professional quality of the Project Proposal: conciseness, clarity, and thoroughness of presentation.
- i. Project manager accessibility.
- j. Ability to complete project in a short period of time.

Consultant Selection Notification: DNER will notify the selection of the consultant no later than May 10th, 2023.

Other Special Conditions:

- This RFP does not commit the to award a contract, to defray any costs incurred in the preparation of a Proposal pursuant to this RFP, or to procure or contract for work.
- All Proposals submitted in response to this RFP will become property of the DNER and will be public records, and as such they may be subjected to public review.
- The DNER, at its sole discretion, reserves the right to cancel this RFP for any or no reason, in part or in its entirety, including but not limited to: selection schedule, submittal date, and submittal requirements. If the DNER cancels or revises the RFP, all potential Contractors will receive a notification letter advising the cancelation or revision of the RFP.
- The DNER reserves the right to request additional information and/or clarifications from any or all potential Contractors participating in this RFP.
- Announcement of the selected contractor, contract awards, and all data provided by the DNER shall be protected from public disclosure. Consultants desiring to release information to the public must receive prior written approval from the DNER. The DNER, at its sole discretion, shall determine the release and disclosure of information related to this RFP and any final work products as a result of this.
- It will be required that the selected Contractor signs a contract for Professional Services.